

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-30. (Canceled)

31-32. (Canceled) A vacuum system comprising:

a vacuum source;

a connector comprising an inlet, an outlet operably coupled directly with the vacuum source, wherein the vacuum source is positioned downstream from the outlet, a separation chamber in communication with the inlet, an air pathway from the separation chamber to the outlet, and a fluid pathway, separate from the air pathway, from the separation chamber to the outlet; and

an end effector in communication with the inlet.

32. (Previously Presented) The vacuum system according to claim 31, further comprising a removable decontamination unit adapted to be coupled to the connector, wherein the decontamination unit comprises a collapsible container containing a pre-measured amount of decontaminating solution.

33. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~34~~ 46, further comprising a flowmeter coupled to the fluid pathway, and a microprocessor in communication with the flowmeter and capable of calculating flow rates and total volume.

34. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 33, further comprising an input device in communication with the microprocessor.

35. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 34, wherein the input device includes a key pad.

36-38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~34~~ 46, wherein the connector further comprises a collection chamber in communication with the separation chamber.

40. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~34~~ 46, wherein the connector further comprises a vacuum regulator in cooperation with the inlet.

41. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~34~~ 46, wherein the separation chamber includes a baffle in cooperation with the inlet for optimizing the separation of liquid and gaseous material.

42. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~34~~ 46, wherein the separation chamber includes a filter in cooperation with the inlet for optimizing the separation of solid materials.

43. (Previously Presented) A vacuum connector adapted to be operably coupled to a vacuum source, the vacuum connector comprising:

- one or more inlets, at least one of which is adapted to be operably coupled with an end effector;
- an outlet adapted to be operably coupled with the vacuum source;
- one or more separation chambers in communication with one or more of the inlets;
- an air pathway from the separation chamber to the outlet;
- a fluid pathway from the separation chamber to the outlet, the fluid pathway being separate from the air pathway; and
- a removable decontamination unit adapted to be coupled to an inlet of the connector; wherein the decontamination unit comprises a collapsible container containing a pre-measured amount of decontaminating solution; and
- wherein the collapsible container is configured such that upon actuation of the vacuum source, the decontaminating solution flows from the collapsible container to the separation chamber and the collapsible container collapses.

44. (Previously Presented) The vacuum connector of claim 43, wherein the separation chamber includes a baffle in cooperation with the inlet for optimizing the separation of liquid and gaseous material.

45. (Previously Presented) A vacuum system comprising:

a vacuum source;

a connector comprising an inlet, an outlet coupled directly with the vacuum source, wherein the vacuum source is positioned downstream from the outlet, a separation chamber in communication with the inlet, an air pathway in communication with the separation chamber and the outlet, and a fluid pathway separate from the air pathway and in communication with the separation chamber;

an end effector in communication with the inlet; and

a removable decontamination unit adapted to be coupled to the connector;

wherein the decontamination unit comprises a collapsible container containing a pre-measured amount of decontaminating solution; and

wherein the collapsible container is configured such that upon actuation of the vacuum source, the decontaminating solution flows from the collapsible container to the separation chamber and the collapsible container collapses.

46. (Currently amended - rewritten in independent form) A vacuum system comprising:

a vacuum source;

a connector comprising an inlet, an outlet operably coupled directly with the vacuum source, wherein the vacuum source is positioned downstream from the outlet, a separation chamber in communication with the inlet, an air pathway from the separation chamber to the outlet, and a fluid pathway, separate from the air pathway, from the separation chamber to the outlet;

an end effector in communication with the inlet; and

a removable decontamination unit adapted to be coupled to the connector, wherein the decontamination unit comprises a collapsible container containing a pre-measured amount of decontaminating solution. ~~The vacuum system of claim 32~~, wherein the collapsible container is

configured such that upon actuation of the vacuum source, the decontaminating solution flows from the collapsible container to the separation chamber and the collapsible container collapses.